

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 5, 2020

The Honorable Neil Chatterjee  
Chairman  
U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street NE  
Washington, DC, 20426

Dear Chairman Chatterjee:

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has put an unimaginable strain on American workers, our economy, and resources. There are more than 30 million unemployed Americans at home wondering if they will be able to make ends meet and provide essential needs for their families. America's energy sector has been especially hard hit as COVID-19 has coincided with action taken by Russia and Saudi Arabia to undermine American energy independence. As a result, America's energy independence is probably facing the greatest threat it has ever faced. While we all work together to provide further relief to American families and ensure a strong economic recovery, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) must ignore calls to place a moratorium on the approval and construction of new natural gas pipeline projects and Liquefied Natural Gas export facilities.

Calls to implement such a moratorium are based on a fabled view that COVID-19 has resulted in diminished public participation opportunity solely unique to natural gas infrastructure. COVID-19 has not diminished opportunity for public comment or public participation for these or other energy-related projects. Arguments for a process moratorium for natural gas-related projects are no more valid than delaying the approval and construction of transmission projects for wind or solar because of COVID-19. Calls for a moratorium of natural gas projects are nothing more than a tactic to undermine these projects and undermine America's interest; not dissimilar to the motivation of Russia in their recent action to collapse energy markets.

America is blessed with abundant energy resources that provide affordable and reliable energy domestically and to the world. America's oil and natural gas sector support millions of good-paying jobs, and recent innovation has led to the low-cost energy that has resulted in a resurgence of domestic manufacturing and energy independence for America. After decades of American lives and treasure sacrificed because of reliance on foreign sources of energy, the United States is finally in a position to not only control its energy destiny but to use American resources as both an economic and geopolitical strength. Absent cheap domestic natural gas, the United States and our allies would increasingly be under the

influence of Russian controlled energy.<sup>1</sup> A March 13, 2020, Wall Street Journal investigative article noted the geopolitical impact of America's recent domestic energy surge:<sup>2</sup>

*“Russia’s oil-market war with Saudi Arabia is part of a strategic campaign to cripple U.S. shale-oil production, a powerful economic tool that increasingly allows Washington to advance its foreign policy agenda, say people briefed on the Kremlin’s policies.”*

Domestic natural energy resources are not only economically and geopolitically important to the United States and our allies, but they also have a much lower environmental profile than our global competitors' energy. According to a Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Lab study first initiated under the Obama Administration, Russia exports of natural gas have a greenhouse gas emissions profile significantly higher than U.S. LNG exports.<sup>3</sup> For example, Russian natural gas exported to Europe has a lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions profile at least 41% higher than U.S. LNG exported to Europe. If Europe were to replace its existing Russian natural gas imports with American LNG, global greenhouse emissions would be reduced by over 70 million tons every year. Those opposing new American pipelines and new LNG facilities are perversely supporting higher global emissions and Russian interests. To undermine the tremendous advantages brought by American oil and gas by halting the assets and resources that are necessary to continue our energy independence is beyond fathomable.

Career executive branch officials have reiterated to congress countless times that moratoriums in the oil and gas industry do not lessen our dependency on fossil fuels.<sup>4</sup> These consequences are clear in some regions of the country where states have taken the route of preventing natural gas infrastructure supported by those who wish to “keep it in the ground”. Due to natural gas infrastructure constraints in the northeast, consumers in that region pay significantly higher energy prices than consumers in most of the rest of the country.<sup>5</sup> Because of political barriers to domestic natural gas, these states rely on energy imports, including natural gas from Russia. The result of this failed policy has led to increased energy costs, increased reliance on foreign energy, and increased emissions.

COVID-19 has also exposed the risk that comes with relying on other nations for resources vital to Americans, especially from those nations that don't share our values or interests. FERC should avoid any action that intentionally increases America's reliance on other nations for vital energy resources. While Russia, Iran, and other adversary nations would see a tremendous benefit if the call to impose a moratorium on the approval and construction of new natural gas pipeline projects and Liquefied Natural Gas export

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<sup>1</sup> Jude Clements, “Without Fracking for natural Gas the U.S. Loses and Putin Wins”, (Forbes, Forbes Magazine, July 19, 2019), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/judeclements/2019/07/19/without-fracking-for-natural-gas-the-u-s-loses-and-putin-wins/#61e3f60b31ff>

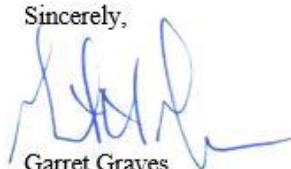
<sup>2</sup> Benoit Faucon, Georgi Kantchev, and Summer Said, “Russia Takes Aim at U.S. Shale Oil Producers,” The Wall Street Journal (Dow Jones & Company, March 13, 2020), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-takes-aim-at-u-s-shale-oil-producers-11584052675>)

<sup>3</sup> Selina Roman-White, Srijana Rai, James Littlefield, Gregory Cooney, Timothy J. Skone, P.E., “Life Cycle Greenhouse Gas Perspective on Exporting Liquefied Natural Gas from the United States: 2019 Update”, National Energy Technology Laboratory (Department of Energy, September 12, 2019), <https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2019/09/f66/2019%20NETL%20LCA-GHG%20Report.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup>Walter Crucikshank, Acting Director, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), “Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement”, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources Hearing, (House Committee on Natural Resources, March 10, 2020),<https://youtu.be/NDRtSdp02Ko?t=6296>.

facilities were heeded, such action would be counter to the interests of America, our allies and the environment.

There is no doubt that we are dealing with one of the worst disasters in world history. It is incumbent on policymakers and resource managers to use all available actions to respond adequately to the challenge before us. FERC must continue to meet its obligation and resist calls to use COVID-19 as a tool to advance a political agenda that undermines America's energy independence.

Sincerely,  
  
Garret Graves  
Member of Congress

Don Young  
Member of Congress

Rob Bishop  
Member of Congress

Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress

Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress

Pete Olson  
Member of Congress

Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress

Paul Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress

Scott Tipton  
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress

Doug LaMalfa  
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Markwayne Mullin  
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Randy K. Weber  
Member of Congress

Ralph Abraham, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Ken Buck  
Member of Congress

Jody Hice  
Member of Congress

Dan Newhouse  
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Liz Cheney  
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Gary Palmer  
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Bruce Westerman  
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Clay Higgins  
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Mike Johnson  
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Kelly Armstrong  
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Carol D. Miller  
Member of Congress

Greg Pence  
Member of Congress

Fred Keller  
Member of Congress